



**ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

4000 Saint Joseph Place NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120-1714

From: Celine B. Radigan, Director

Voice: 505. 831.8180, FAX: 505.831.8248, Email cradigan@archdiosf.org

**Former Episcopal Bishop to Head New US Ordinariate for
Ex-Anglicans
Fr. Jeffrey N. Steenson of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe**



WASHINGTON— Friday, January 06, 2012 – IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pope Benedict XVI has established the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter to serve former Anglican groups and clergy in the United States who wish to become Catholic. He also named the 59-year-old Fr. Jeffrey N. Steenson of Houston, TX to lead the new structure as its ordinary.

The creation of the ordinariate and the appointment of Fr. Steenson were publicized in Washington, January 2, by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

Similar to a diocese though national in scope, the ordinariate will be based in Houston, TX, and will include parishes and communities across the United States that will be fully Catholic, while retaining elements of their Anglican heritage and traditions. To date, over 100 clergy have applied to be ordained Catholic for the ordinariate and 1,400 individuals from 22 communities have asked to join the ordinariate.

Jeffrey Steenson was born April 1, 1952 in Camp Rucker, AL and was raised on a family farm in Hillsboro, ND. A former Episcopal bishop, he received his theological training at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois and Harvard Divinity School, and a doctor of philosophy degree from Oxford University.

He was ordained an Episcopal priest in 1980 and served as an assistant at a parish in Highfield, Oxford, then as rector of three parishes in the United States. He was an officer for the Episcopal Synod of America, and Canon to the Ordinary for the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 2004, Fr. Steenson was elected bishop of the Diocese of Rio Grande.

He resigned in 2007 and was received into the Catholic Church. Fr. Steenson was ordained a priest of the **Archdiocese of Santa Fe** in 2009 by **Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan** under the pastoral provision for married former Anglican clergy. Since that time, he has been the Carl and Lois Davis Professor in Patristic Studies at the University of St. Thomas Center for Faith and Culture in Houston.

Fr. Steenson is married. He and his wife, Debra, have three adult children and one grandchild.— *END*

Pictured here: Former Episcopal Bishop Jeffrey N. Steenson, right, blesses Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan of Santa Fe, N.M., during Steenson's ordination to the Catholic priesthood at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Rio Rancho, N.M., Feb. 21, 2009. Fr. Steenson spent 24 years as an Episcopal priest and three as a bishop in New Mexico. (CNS photo/Celine Baca Radigan, Archdiocese of Santa Fe)